
Saints Alive!: News & Announcements for the week of December 23, 2018

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Fri, Dec 21, 2018 at 6:40 PM



Saints' Alive!

News & Events for the week of December 23, 2018

Weekly Calendar

Sunday 12/23

8:30a Celtic Holy Eucharist
10:30a Holy Eucharist
Hanging of the Greens

Monday 12/24

4:00p Holy Eucharist
7:00p AA
10:00p Holy Eucharist

Tuesday 12/25

10:30a Holy Eucharist

Wednesday 12/26

No planned activities

Thursday 12/27

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Readings for this Week:

Micah 5:2-5a
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
Canticle 15

President: The Rev. Dr. Chris Johnson

Preacher: The Rev. Chris Humphrey

No planned activities

Friday 12/28

Office Closed

11:00a AA

10:00a Resale Shop

Saturday 12/29

8:00a Community

Breakfast

10:00a

Resale/Produce/Book
Shop

Future Events

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Dec 23 Hanging of the Greens

Dec 24 Services at 4:00p and 10:00p

Dec 25 Service at 10:30

Jan 5 Budget Planning Meeting

Jan 27 Annual Meeting

. . . from the Rector

While the short season of Advent is one marked by profound expectation, the shorter season of Christmas is one marked by wonder and praise. Liturgically speaking anyway.

My experience in life has never fully lived up to either expectation. There is something to be said about both seasons and what I believe is a shared human disappointment about them. Remembering back into childhood I recall my great anticipation of Christmas was accompanied by an equally, if not greater, sense of introspection. In my adult years I found it easy to interpret that "sense of introspection" as my intentional Advent focus on spiritual preparation...getting my interior life in order if you will. Then the mystery of Christmas really became exciting as we went to church for midnight mass on Christmas Eve. Beautiful music, low lighting, candles burning, incense rising into the air. Back home to finish getting presents out and placed under the tree, our younger siblings were in bed waiting for the morning excitement, while we older siblings stayed up to sit with our folks and open presents without the overwhelming excitement of the younger siblings. Presents exchanged, we went to bed so we could start the process over in a couple hours (or a couple minutes...sleep time passed quickly). More activity began as final preparations focused on a large family (maybe extended family) meal. Then as quickly as everything came together it was over and life fell back into its familiar rhythm.

I don't actually think our Advent and Christmas experiences were all that different from those of many other folks across the country. I consulted a study to discover that mental health related issues tend to be lower in the weeks leading up to Christmas and that after Christmas they return with a spike of increased activity.^[i] I suspect that the depth of our need to anticipate a better time, a new day, is very real. And for Christians Advent marks that period of growing anticipation. The longed for hope of Christmas can never be fully realized or lived up to. Just like me as a child, once the presents were opened and the mystery revealed, it seemed that my experience of emotional let-down was always close behind. Just as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, our grasp of the returning Messiah is but a handful of air and quickly disappears. A similar study wondered if "lack of faith may merely be another symptom of the 'helplessness, hopelessness, anhedonia' that characterizes clinical depression."^[ii] Maybe the issue is indeed one of faith; which the Letter to The Hebrews defines as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews

11:1). Could it be, for many people of faith, that Christmas gives birth once again to natural human doubt and need for assurance? Special gifts and delightful rich food, even being with family and loved ones may simply not be enough to overcome doubt.

Christmas and its concurrent celebrations are upon us and doubt may once again be nipping at its heels. This time can be different however. And here's how.

Take your focus off of tomorrow and its attendant worries and preoccupations. Breathe, sit still, and take a long moment to be grateful that you're here now. Breathe, sit still, and give thanks for what you have rather than regret about what you don't have. Breathe, sit still, open your heart and mind to God's Holy Spirit who knows you well, in fact, better than you know yourself. And simply be in each other's presence without need of saying or doing anything. Delight in that moment and be thankful.

[i] Sansone and Sansone, "The Christmas Effect on Psychopathology" in *Innovation in Clinical Neuroscience* 2011 Dec

[ii] Doolittle and Farrell, "The Association Between Spirituality and Depression in an Urban Clinic" in *The Primary Care Companion to The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 2004.

The Blessing of our Homes at Epiphany

Often we hear that Christmas is not just a day long. It is a season, twelve days long. Nor is our observance of the wonder of God become human to be limited to gift giving. There are many ways of celebrating "God with us." How could this not be the case? For we are celebrating a fundamental conviction that when we seek meaning and purpose and direction in our lives we find God...who has been seeking us all the time. One of the sites where our seeking is most candid is where we live. Of course, we can find God seeking us anywhere and at any time, but home is so often where we encounter the divine in the ordinary.

There is a simple and beautiful custom among Christians of all sorts and conditions that assures, protects and encourages us in sensing the divine in the ordinary. It is the custom of the Blessing of Homes at Epiphany. The Feast of the Epiphany is January 6. For many of the faithful, Epiphany is the culmination of the celebration of God with us, rivaling Christmas. It is on Epiphany that we recall the visit of the three Eastern sages who have been following the star to find Jesus.

When they find him, the Holy Family is no longer in a stable, but have found a house. (Mt. 2:11) Thus, not only are these three the first gentiles to find and be found by Jesus, they are the first to be welcomed into his home. This image of home has been particularly powerful. From it arises the custom of blessing our homes during the Epiphany season, a custom which we would like to offer the people of All Saints Church.

The rite itself is simple. This is not like the blessing of a new home which can be more elaborate. This rite acknowledges the dailiness of our lives of faith. Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of it is the "chalking of the door" (or the sprinkling of baptismal water or the anointing with holy oil....all determined by the hosts in consultation with the celebrant).

The "chalking of the door" (or any place adjacent to where people generally enter and leave the house) is a particularly meaningful gesture. The celebrant or a member of the household will use chalk, the most ordinary of materials, to inscribe the formula 20 + C + M + B+ 18 near the main door. The "+" are signs of blessing. The letters have a dual meaning: the names of the Magi (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, though these names are not mentioned in Scripture), framed by the year of the blessing, 2018. Alternatively, they may represent the Latin phrase: Christus mensionem benedicat ("May Christ bless this house."). It is a reminder and comfort to all who enter and depart this house or apartment; it reminds us that God is with us everywhere; it reminds us that our homes are to be havens and sanctuaries. and it is a subtle witness to any who may notice and inquire of the commitments of this household. Of course, the chalk will fade and then disappear, itself a valuable lesson. This is why the rite is renewable during the Epiphany season next year, should one choose it. [Also, a form of the blessing can be used in offices and businesses, its intention being to welcome and include all.]

The season of Epiphany begins on Sunday, January 6. For all practical purposes it ends on Sunday, March 3. If you would like to have your house blessed by one of the parish clergy, please sign-up below (see, the bulletin board) or call the parish office (248-334-4571). You will be contacted and a visit scheduled.

Pictorial Directory Photo Session

Our photo session was a success!

A few were not able to make your appointments. And we would like EVERYONE to be included in the photo directory. If you have a professionally composed photo that can be scanned, you can submit the photos to Pamela Todoroff. Please make certain to print the names of everyone in the photo on the back. If you have an electronic version of a photo you would like to include, please send it to pamela.todoroff@gmail.com as soon as you can.

And a special thank you to MaryBeth Tygielski, Robert Dawson, and Pete Morgan for assistance and encouragement all through the day! ~Pamela

Note from the Treasurer

As we near the end of 2018, please consider paying any outstanding balance on your 2018 pledge in this year. Payments received (or postmarked) after December 31 cannot be recorded against this year's budget. I would like for us to minimize the 2018 deficit as much as possible.

If you are older than 70-1/2 years and have a traditional IRA account, you are required to take a minimum distribution (RMD) each year. You can make a contribution directly to All Saints' Church as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). You are allowed to directly transfer up to \$100,000 per year to charities of your choice. Your gift will not be reported as taxable income to you and will count toward your minimum distribution requirement. Please contact your individual plan administrator for additional information. If you plan to make such a gift to the church, please notify the church finance office in advance. Frequently the checks are received from the broker without identification of the donor.

If you have not turned in your 2019 please card, please prayerfully consider doing so before year end. Next year's budget is based on pledge commitments received.

Annual Meeting

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

You are cordially invited to attend the All Saints' Annual Meeting & Potluck on Sunday, January 27th, 2019. Fellowship, business meeting and deliciousness!!!

As you know, at this time we elect four new Vestry members to replace the four whose terms are up. We are in the process of putting the Vestry slate together. If you would consider running for Vestry, or know someone you would like to nominate, please contact one of the members of the nominating committee (Lisa Berg, MaryBeth Tygielski, Bob Senseney or Gail Hunger). You must have permission from the one you are nominating before doing so.

The Old Rectory Christmas Shoppe

The holiday spirit has invaded the Resale Shop! The entire second floor of the shop has been turned into a Christmas wonderland. There are so many beautiful ornaments and decorations for you to choose from. Come see this wonderful addition to our campus which may be fondly referred to as "Frankenmuth South". See you there!!!

Christmas and Holiday Shopping

When you are doing your shopping on **Amazon** this year, remember to use the link that appears at the bottom of the first page on the All Saints' website. All Saints' receives up to 6% of all purchases from Amazon!

Pastoral Care, Notes & Birthdays

Office Administration Hours

Tuesday	9:30-4:00
Wednesday	9:30-4:00
Thursday	9:30-3:30

Prayers

For those who have asked for our prayers: Ali, Alicia, Annamary, Chris and Lisa, David, Delphine, Ernie, Frannie, Glenden, Gordie, Greg, Jan, Janet, John, Lenora, Linda, Lisa, Mark, Mary Louise, Micah, Michelle, Reatha, Sarah, Shari,

Shirley, Susy, Sydney, Twyla, Ward and Charles.

Birthdays:

Dec 24 Connie Davis
Dec 25 Bonnie Anderson
Dec 27 Nancy Derby

Notes

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Church e-mail Contacts

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Bound Together

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